

What is claimed is:

1. A digital distribution method for transmitting digital contents representing an entity of a product over a network and, subsequently, delivering the product, said digital distribution method comprising the steps of:

incorporating the digital contents into a control program controlling the digital contents and transmitting the control program over the network;

delivering the product after a predetermined period has elapsed after the transmission; and

disabling the digital contents by said control program after a contents availability period has elapsed, said contents availability period being set to a time longer than the predetermined period.

2. The digital distribution method according to claim 1 wherein said control program is transmitted with the digital contents incorporated in such a way that only the control program may process the digital contents and, when the transmission of said control program is completed, starts a time measuring operation of the contents availability period.

3. The digital distribution method according to claim 1 wherein, when the contents availability period expires, said control program erases the digital contents or erases itself in conjunction with the digital contents.

4. The digital distribution method according to claim 1 wherein the product includes various books and documents, music CDs, and video DVDs.

5. A digital distribution method for transmitting digital contents representing an entity of a product over a network and, subsequently, delivering the product, said digital distribution method comprising the steps of:

providing, by a product vendor, a plurality of product items for browsing over the network;

selecting, by a product buyer, a desired item from a plurality of browsed items, specifying a desired delivery  
5 period for a delivery of the product item, and placing an order for the product over the network;

incorporating, by the vendor, the digital contents into a control program controlling the digital contents and transmitting the control program to the buyer over the network  
10 in response to the order, said digital contents representing the entity of the product item selected by the buyer;

delivering the product from the vendor to the buyer when the desired delivery period has elapsed from a time the order is placed; and

15 disabling, by said control program, the digital contents when a contents availability period has elapsed, said contents availability period being set in said control program and set to a time longer than the desired delivery period.

20 6. The digital distribution method according to claim 5 wherein said control program is transmitted with the digital contents incorporated in such a way that only the control program may process the digital contents and, when the transmission of said control program is completed, starts a  
25 time measuring operation of the contents availability period.

7. The digital distribution method according to claim 5 wherein, when the contents availability period expires, said control program erases the digital contents or erases itself  
30 in conjunction with the digital contents.

8. The digital distribution method according to claim 5 wherein the product includes various books and documents, music CDs, and video DVDs.

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9. A digital distribution method for transmitting

digital contents representing an entity of a product over a network and, subsequently, delivering the product, said digital distribution method comprising the steps of:

5 providing, by a product vendor, a plurality of product items for browsing over the network;

selecting, by a product buyer, a desired item from a plurality of browsed items, specifying a shipping charge for a delivery of the product item, and placing an order for the product over the network;

10 incorporating, by the vendor, the digital contents into a control program controlling the digital contents and transmitting the control program to the buyer over the network in response to the order, said digital contents representing the entity of the product item selected by the buyer;

15 delivering the product from the vendor to the buyer when a required delivery period has elapsed from a time the order is placed, said required delivery period being determined based on said shipping charge; and

20 disabling, by said control program, the digital contents when a contents availability period has elapsed, said contents availability period being set in said control program and set to a time longer than the required delivery period.

10. The digital distribution method according to claim 25 9 wherein said control program is transmitted with the digital contents incorporated in such a way that only the control program may process the digital contents and, when the transmission of said control program is completed, starts a time measuring operation of the contents availability period.

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11. The digital distribution method according to claim 9 wherein, when the contents availability period expires, said control program erases the digital contents or erases itself in conjunction with the digital contents.

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12. The digital distribution method according to claim

9 wherein the product includes various books and documents,  
music CDs, and video DVDs.

13. A digital distribution system comprising a network,  
5 a server connected to the network and installed in a product  
vendor side, and a client computer connected to the network  
and installed in a product buyer side,

wherein said server comprises:

web pages comprising an item browsing page allowing a  
10 product buyer to browse a plurality of product items over the  
network for selecting a desired item therefrom and a product  
order page allowing the product buyer to specify, over the  
network, a desired delivery period or a shipping charge for  
a delivery of the selected product item;

15 digital contents saving means for saving therein digital  
contents representing an entity of each product item;

control program saving means for saving therein a control  
program which is transmitted with a contents availability  
period set and the digital contents incorporated at digital  
20 contents transmission time, wherein the control program  
disables the digital contents when the contents availability  
period expires after the transmission, said contents  
availability period being longer than the desired delivery  
period or than a required delivery period determined based  
25 on the shipping charge;

transmission control means for controlling the  
transmission of the digital contents, said transmission  
control means calling the control program from said control  
program saving means in response to an order from the buyer  
30 and incorporating the digital contents, which is read from  
said digital contents saving means, into said control program  
for transmission to the buyer over said network; and

delivery control means for controlling the delivery of  
the product, said delivery control means delivering the product  
35 from the vendor to the buyer when the desired delivery period  
or the required delivery period has elapsed from the

transmission.

14. A digital distribution system comprising a network,  
a server connected to the network and installed in a product  
5 vendor side, and a client computer connected to the network  
and installed in a product buyer side,

wherein said client computer comprises:

a browser allowing web pages prepared in said server  
to be browsed over the network;

10 wherein the web pages displayed on a screen of said client  
computer by said browser comprises:

an item browsing page allowing a product buyer to browse  
a plurality of product items and prompting the product buyer  
to select a desired items therefrom; and

15 a product order page allowing the product buyer to  
specify a desired delivery period or a shipping charge for  
a delivery of the selected product item and prompting the  
product buyer to place an order,

wherein digital contents are incorporated into a control  
20 program controlling the digital contents in response to the  
order, transmitted from the vendor to the buyer over the network,  
and displayed on the screen of said client computer by said  
browser, said digital contents representing an entity of the  
product item selected by the buyer, and

25 wherein, after the desired delivery period or a required  
delivery period determined based on the shipping charge has  
elapsed since the transmission and the product is delivered  
from the vendor to the buyer, said control program stops  
displaying said digital contents on the screen of the client  
30 computer when the contents availability period set in said  
control program has elapsed.

15. A digital distribution system comprising a network,  
a server connected to the network and installed in a product  
35 vendor side, and a client computer connected to the network  
and installed in a product buyer side,

wherein said server comprises:

web pages comprising an item browsing page allowing a product buyer to browse a plurality of product items over the network for selecting a desired item therefrom and a product order page allowing the product buyer to specify, over the network, a desired delivery period or a shipping charge for a delivery of the selected product item;

digital contents saving means for saving therein digital contents representing an entity of each product item;

control program saving means for saving therein a control program which is transmitted with a contents availability period set and the digital contents incorporated at digital contents transmission time, wherein the control program disables the digital contents when the contents availability period expires after the transmission, said contents availability period being longer than the desired delivery period or than a required delivery period determined based on the shipping charge;

transmission control means for controlling the transmission of the digital contents, said transmission control means calling the control program from said control program saving means in response to an order from the buyer and incorporating the digital contents, which is read from said digital contents saving means, into said control program for transmission to the buyer over said network; and

delivery control means for controlling the delivery of the product, said delivery control means delivering the product from the vendor to the buyer when the desired delivery period or the required delivery period has elapsed from the transmission,

wherein said client computer comprises:

a browser allowing the web pages to be browsed on a screen over the network;

wherein the digital contents are incorporated into said control program in response to the order, transmitted from the vendor to the buyer over the network, and displayed on

the screen of said client computer by said browser, said digital contents representing the entity of the product item selected by the buyer, and

5 wherein, after the desired delivery period or the required delivery period has elapsed from the transmission and the product is delivered from the vendor to the buyer, said control program stops displaying said digital contents on the screen of the client computer when the contents availability period set in said control program has elapsed.

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16. The digital distribution system according to claim 14 wherein, when the desired delivery period has elapsed after the transmission, said control program erases the digital contents or erases itself in conjunction with the digital  
15 contents to prevent the digital contents from being displayed on the screen of the client computer.

17. The digital distribution system according to claim 5 wherein, when the desired delivery period has elapsed after the transmission, said control program erases the digital  
20 contents or erases itself in conjunction with the digital contents to prevent the digital contents from being displayed on the screen of the client computer.

25 18. A digital contents transmission method for transmitting digital contents representing an entity of a product over a network, said digital transmission method comprising the steps of:

30 providing, by a product vendor, a plurality of product items for browsing over the network;

selecting, by a product buyer, a desired item from a plurality of browsed items, specifying a desired contents availability period for the product item, and placing an order for the product over the network;

35 incorporating, by the vendor, the digital contents into a control program controlling the digital contents and

transmitting the control program to the buyer over the network in response to the order, said digital contents representing the entity of the product item selected by said buyer; and

- 5        disabling, by said control program, the digital contents when the contents availability period has elapsed, said contents availability period being set in said control program.